7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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CHAPTER 5

Slaves and Slave-dealers

We had expected lush green valleys and thus the mission station lying on its terrace of sand was to some extent a disappointment. There was greenery in the area, as we knew from having passed it on the way, but it was quite far off and one had to wade laboriously through deep sand to reach it.

Those green valleys could be called oases. Nazaret, perhaps, was the one relatively peaceful place on the whole peninsula. The Indians respected the monks, who were kindly, understanding, civilized people. Nazaret was a fixed point and the only place where we could set up a headquarters from which to make excursions of varying length; otherwise we would have to travel and keep travelling all the time we were in Guajira. There were supplies of food there and drinking water. They had a rainwater cistern and also a casimba with clear water that never seemed to run dry. It had cost them a lot of labour and effort to erect the buildings there. All the materials had been brought by pack-donkey from Puerto Estrella, to which it was taken in schooners. Maize, sugar and other such provisions still had to be fetched the same way. They were not always able to get meat from the Indians. Once it was nearly three months before they could replenish their larder. They had great difficulty in protecting things from ants, which were as numerous there as everywhere in tropical South America, to say nothing of other noxious creatures.

The monks and nuns together looked after two hundred Indian children, and their support was not to be hazarded. The Capuchins always concentrate on the children, whom

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
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797 they take into boarding schools, so-called *orfelinatos*. It
736 was not difficult to get children for these schools there. Many poor families voluntarily hand their children over in hard times, when they cannot support them themselves. Others sell them for a quantity of maize. If the mission did not buy them, some well-to-do chief would, and they [567] would become slaves. The monks did not always know whether a child offered them was stolen or not.

Well-to-do Indians also liked to send their children to Nazaret to learn Spanish and other useful things. These, however, often became more Indian than the Indians once they left the school. We met a few who refused to remember their Spanish and who appeared to be quite uninfluenced by the monks. This evident reaction against civilization was due, perhaps, to the strictly ordered life of the school.

The poor children had to stay there always. Some of them worked in a cotton plantation which the monks had started in order to help the mission's finances. There were already one or two married couples. They were not considered proper Indians, because the men wore trousers.

584 A Guajiro girl is normally not allowed to choose her
797 husband. Her family does that. Thus, if the monks and nuns decided which pupil was to marry which, it amounted to the same thing. The monks, of course, did not get a bride-price, nor did the bridegroom often receive his morning-gift that traditionally consists of ornaments and clothing.

797 Why had they built the mission station just at that spot, where it was so difficult to maintain it? The choice had been dictated mainly by the monks' desire to try and save children and others from being sold as slaves. Also there was water and it was near a harbour.

567 Do people really traffic in slaves in our day? Yes, slavery still exists. In Guajira, the traffic increases whenever there is a drought and times are bad. It has always gone through Castilletes on the south coast, which lies just where the frontier between Colombia and Venezuela reaches the sea. The slaves are sold to Venezuela, which is also more accessible for that part of the peninsula.

8:Armstrong & Métraux E-4 (no date) 1948
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726 on equal terms. He then approached the enemy from the left while making quick movements, jumps, and turns, with his legs apart and his knees bent. More recently, according to Ernst (1887 c), war is not declared, attempts being made to take the enemy by surprise.

[797] Wars last indefinitely, sometimes being broken by a peace brought about by an influential "civilizado" or the Capuchin monks, the latter sometimes paying the retribution demanded out of their own pockets.

579 Some tribes, such as the *Corina* of Serranía Cosina (actually a conglomeration of outcastes rather than a sib), make their living almost entirely by robbery and pillage, destroying houses, stealing cattle, and killing or enslaving their enemies.

LIFE CYCLE

843 **Birth and childhood.**—During pregnancy a woman continues to do her heavy work up to the very hour of delivery. At childbirth, the shaman

844 pronounces various spells over the patient and applies poultices made of

[154] dried flowers, roots, etc. A large, heavy stone placed over the womb and vigorous massaging bring about the birth. If the placenta is not soon expelled, the woman drinks a medicine concocted by the medicine man. As soon as the child is safely delivered the father serves rum and chicha

[484] to all his relatives. If the pains of childbirth appear when the sib is on the march, the woman mounts and rides ahead so that when the sib catches up the event is practically over. The husband cuts the cord with his machete and cauterizes its ends with a glowing ember. The woman

[854] then continues on the march with the child in a sling on her back. When the permanent camp is reached she washes herself and the child.

851 Baptism is a Christian ceremony which the *Goajiro* have adopted, and

551 most of the Indians are called by Spanish names, as their real names may

177 not be mentioned. Teknonymy is practiced; a parent is addressed by its child's name plus a prefix, nushi or sushi for the father, ni or si for the mother. Thus, a father may be called Nushijuan after a son or Sushijuana after a daughter.

857 At 6 or 7, girls learn to grind salt, pick cotton, and tend the smaller

868 animals; the boys imitate their fathers.

855 Parents are said to show little affection for their children, sometimes

[436] selling them at Sinamaica. They receive $10 or $15 for a child of 8 or 9 years. The purchaser becomes the child's guardian, teaches him the Catholic faith, and keeps him until he is 17 years old. These children

● [536 rarely return home. Abandoned children are taken to the San Antonio

797] orphanage, where the girls continue to wear their *Goajiro* dress, but the boys are put into jackets and pants.

881 **Girls' puberty.**—At her first menstruation a girl is isolated in a small dark hut and stripped of all her ornaments. She lies in a hammock, sometimes hoisted near the roof. For the first 2 days she drinks no